

Message Text

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47

ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NIC-01 SAJ-01 SAM-01 IO-10 CU-02

SP-02 AID-05 EB-07 NSC-05 RSC-01 CIEP-01 TRSE-00

SS-15 STR-01 OMB-01 CEA-01 COME-00 AGR-05 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 SIL-01 LAB-04 /093 W

----- 072162

R 061541Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1215

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 129

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, EG

SUBJECT: GOE ROUNDS UP COMMUNISTS

SUMMARY. FOLLOWING JAN 1 RIOTING, GOE HAS UNDERTAKEN ROUNDUP OF MARXISTS; ARRESTS MAY TOTAL 400. SADAT IS TAKING PUBLIC CREDIT FOR EMERGENCY MEASURES TO IMPROVE ECONOMIC SITUATION. GOE IS PROJECTING IMAGE OF REGIME WHICH WILL NOT TOLERATE VIOLENCE, BUT WHICH IS URGENTLY SEEKING REMOVE ECONOMIC CAUSES OF POPULAR UNREST. END SUMMARY.

1. ACCORDING TO PUBLISHED REPORTS BASED ON MININT INFORMATION GIVEN TO MENA AND INDIVIDUAL NEWSPAPERS, THOSE ARRESTED IN CONNECTION JAN 1 CAIRO RIOTING ORIGINALLY NUMBERED 48. ON JAN 4 FIGURE WAS GIVEN AS 62 AND THEN ON JAN 6 AS 120.

2. NUMBER OF THOSE ARRESTED IS IN FACT MUCH HIGHER AND,
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ACCORDING TO ONE SOURCE WITH CLOSE CONNECTIONS TO MININT, IS

AT LEAST 400. DETAINEES ARE FROM THE EGYPTIAN POLITICAL LEFT AND INCLUDE WORKERS, STUDENTS AND JOURNALISTS. ACCORDING TO AKHBAR, AMONG THOSE ARRESTED IS EGYPTIAN JEW NAMED SHIHATA HARON.

3. OUR INFORMATION IS THAT FOUR JOURNALISTS HAVE SO FAR BEEN ARRESTED. ALL ARE COMMUNISTS. THEY INCLUDE: A. SALAH 'ISA, PRESENTLY GUMHURIYYA STAFFER, WHOSE LEFTIST PUBLICATION AL-KATIB WAS CRITICIZED BY MINCULTURE THIS AUTUMN (CAIRO A-156); B. SAFINAZ KAZIM, WIFE OF MARXIST POED AHMAD FU'AD NAJM, AND WELL-KNOWN COMMUNIST IN HER OWN RIGHT; SHE IS PRESENTLY WORKING FOR MUSAWWAR AND WAS ALSO ARRESTED IN FEB 73 FOR PARTICIPATION IN AIN SHAMS UNIVERSITY SIT-DOWN STRIKE; C. S'AD OR SA'ID) KAMIL, MARXIST JOURNALIST WORKING FOR GUMHURIYYA; D. FOURTH NAME UNKNOWN TO US.

4. SO FAR, NO OFFICIAL GOE STATEMENT HAS LINKED COMMUNISTS BY NAME TO EVENTS OF JAN 1. MENA DESPATCHES, HOWEVER, WHICH ON IMPORTANT SUBJECTS ARE VIRTUALLY DICTATED BY GOE, NOW SPEAK OPENLY OF COMMUNIST INVOLVEMENT. MENA STORY JAN 4, FOR EXAMPLE, CITED MININT SOURCE AS STATING GOE HAS UNCOVERED "NEW COMMUNIST ORGANIZATION" AND IS NOW INTERROGATING ITS MEMBERS. ANTI-REGIME PAMPHLETS WERE REPORTEDLY SEIZED, AS WAS, ACCORDING TO AKHBAR, A PRINTING PRESS. AKBAR BRINGS SADAT'S NAME IN ITS REPORTING, PRESUMABLY TO UNDERScore HEINOUS NATURE OF DEMONSTRATIONS, CLAIMING ONE OF RIOTERS CHANTS WAS: "SADAT, SADAT WHERE IS LIBERTY?" FROM OTHER SOURCE WE HEAR PREVALENT CHANTS WERE "ANSWAR BEY, SHOES ARE SIX GUINEAS", AND ALSO "ALI AND MUSTAFA AMIN (VIEWED AS PRO-US), FREEDOM OF PRESS IS FOR WHOM?"

5. PRESIDENT SADAT CONTINUES TO TAKE HIGHLY-PUBLICIZED MEASURES TO DEAL PERSONALLY WITH ECONOMIC PROBLEMS WHICH "PRVOCATEURS" HAD SEIZED ON. ACCORDING ALL LOCAL PAPERS, SADAT HAD MEETING WITH PRIMIN HEGAZY JAN 4 TO REVIEW MEASURES TO "RECTIFY EMPLOYEE CONDITIONS". HE REPORTEDLY INSTRUCTED HEGAZY TO SEEK PARTICIPATION LABOR, MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNORATE COUNCILS IN DEVELOPMENT PLANS, AND DISCUSSED GOE'S PLAN TO PROVIDE ESSENTIAL SUPPLY COMMODITIES. ALL PAPERS NOTE THAT DISCUSSION TOOK PLACE "IN LIGHT OF RECENT RIOTS". FOLLOWING DAY, BANNER HEADLINES ANNOUNCED CABINET DECISION TO ALLOCATE FUNDS FOR IMMEDIATE IMPORT

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OF LARGE QUANTITIES OF WHEAT, FLOUR, MAIZE, LENTILS, BEANS, TEA, SUGAR, FROZEN MEAT, AND CHEESE, AND TO RAISE INDIVIDUAL QUOTAS FOR PURCHASE OF RATIONED TEA AND COTTON MATERIAL. (COMMENT: IN FACT, THE ANNOUNCEMENT WAS MERELY REPETITION OF PREVIOUS PUBLISHED ALLOCATIONS, BUT SEEMED DESIGNED TO RESPOND TO DEMONSTRATORS' DEMANDS.) SUPPLY MINISTER WAS INSTRUCTED TO FOLLOW UP ON DECISION TO REDUCE SHOE PRICES. ALL MINISTERS WERE DIRECTED TO CUT DOWN EXPENDITURES IMMEDIATELY, MINJUSTICE IS TO APPLY STRICTLY LAW

ON ILLICIT GAINS.

6. PUBLICITY GIVEN TO PRESIDENT SADAT'S MEETING WITH ROSE AL-YUSUF, EDITOR SHARQAWI ON JAN 6 IS PROBABLY ALSO MEANT AS SIGNAL OF PERSONAL PRESIDENTIAL INVOLVEMENT IN HANDLING OF CURRENT SECURITY PROBLEM. PRESS GAVE NO REASON FOR MEETING, BUT READERS WILL ASSUME THAT SADAT HAD SOME STRONG WORDS TO SAY TO SHARQAWI WHOSE ARTICLE IN LATEST EDITION BLAMED CIA FOR FOMENTING JAN 1 RIOTS.

7. COMMENT: GOE IS MAKING ITS POSITION CLEAR. VIOLENCE AND CONSPIRACY TO COMMIT VIOLENCE WILL NOT BE TOLERATED. PRESS IS LINKING JAN 1 EVENTS WITH PORT SAID DEC 22 INCIDENT, AND BLAMING THE WHOLE ON THE MARXISTS. SOVIET EMBASSY WILL NOT BE PLEASED.
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